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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 000690

SENSITIVE  
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BE](#)  
SUBJECT: EMBASSY BRUSSELS OUTREACH TO DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

REF: STATE 44903

EMBASSY ACTIVITIES  
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¶1. (U) Over the past year, the Embassy has promoted the President's Freedom Agenda in numerous ways. Post regularly works with the Belgian government to support democracy-promotion initiatives, for example, the transnational network to advance the rights of women from Belgium, Morocco, Turkey and Iran, which was created by the office of the then-Minister of Justice. The group also organizes events that promote understanding and cooperation among both sides of the Middle East conflict.

¶2. (U) In addition, the Embassy's Political Counselor met several times to hear the concerns of various democracy and human rights activists including from Amnesty International and the Syriac Christian Association of Europe. The Embassy regularly had outreach initiatives with human rights non-governmental organizations and has a substantial program on Muslim outreach that extends to Belgium's primarily Moroccan- and Turkish-origin Islamic communities. Public Diplomacy hosts events of many types in many locations. As part of the broader EUR effort, PD and Political take active part in identifying persons and events to preempt Islamic radicalization. Many of our activities are targeted to immigrants and minorities in Belgium, especially children in the multicultural schools here. Some of these attendees and students may come from un-free nations but since we don't ask about the ethnic background of attendees we don't know how many would fit this category. Belgium is not home to significant numbers of dissidents focused on un-free nations.

WORKING WITH THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT  
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In UN Fora  
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¶3. (U) As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2007-08, Belgium, despite reservations regarding the likelihood of success, supported U.S. initiatives for resolutions to promote human rights in Burma/Myanmar and Zimbabwe.

¶4. (U) Belgium remains active in the OSCE since its 2006 chairmanship. Post continues to work closely with the GoB to promote democratic reform and human rights through this forum, particularly in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Belgium sought an enhanced OSCE role in Kosovo and was one of the first countries to recognize an independent Kosovo. In addition, Belgian FM De Gucht has pushed for democracy in Belarus.

On the Military Side  
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15. (U) Belgium keeps some 1200 of its some 40,000 military deployed worldwide, including contingents with KFOR in Kosovo (Belgium was a founding member), in UNIFIL in Lebanon, trainers in Benin, military support units in the Democratic Republic of Congo; most recently, it added support forces to Chad. Also in Lebanon, a Belgian jurist led the investigation into the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri, with Brussels subsequently contributing 250,000 Euros to tribunal startup costs. Another Belgian has been selected to be a tribunal judge.

#### Afghanistan

16. (SBU) Belgium has gradually increased its contributions to NATO ISAF forces. Initial deployments of forty troops to protect Kabul airport increased by four when Belgium took control of the airport in October 2007. In April 2007, the Belgian government decided to redeploy two F-16 aircraft from the Baltics to ISAF. The Belgian government also decided to leave the airport contingent in place to help build a new security wall around an ammunition zone near the airport, an effort for which Belgium made the top contribution of 300,000 euros. The Belgian government recently informed the Embassy that Belgium would keep 25-40 troops in country in order to participate in an OMLT.

#### Civil Society

17. (U) Belgium's contributions to democracy-development

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initiatives, many under U.S. aegis, have been wide-ranging and, given the country's size and budgetary constraints, remained at a respectable level. As a result of these budgetary constraints, Belgium often prefers to make contributions to civil society in-kind, such as when the Ministry of Justice sponsored and implemented judicial training through exchange programs with Iran. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is considering repeating a training program for Iraqi diplomats, justices and politicians in the ways of multi-party federal democracy.

FOX.

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